

IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

A NEWS BULLETIN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO AND THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS—COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

News You Can Use

No. 36 Fall 2005

Now is the time to apply for Tree City USA!

See page 3 for details.

Coordinator's Column

A Storm is Brewing— Is Your Community Ready?

Although Hurricane Katrina did not last long, its effects will be felt for decades. The human tragedy is incomprehensible, as hundreds of people died, thousands were injured, and even more were left homeless. The economic loss, too, is staggering. If you haven't already done so, I urge all of you to make a contribution to one of the relief organizations – our assistance is still needed.

Fortunately, storm damage or natural disasters of this magnitude do not occur frequently. But potentially damaging events, such as ice storms, strong winds, flooding, earthquakes and wildfires affect communities across the country with alarming regularity. When a disaster strikes, fallen or damaged trees can take down power lines, block roads, damage homes and other property, slow down rescue efforts, and add significantly to the costs of cleanup. Since public safety is one of the most important responsibilities of community government, your community can and should take steps to minimize damage and the impacts of these events. What can be done?

First, many tree failures are preventable. Proper species selection, planting and ongoing care can create a healthy community forest able to withstand all but the most damaging weather-related events. Thinning trees for appropriate spacing of tree canopies and removing ladder fuels can create defensible space against wildfires. Developing and implementing a tree risk management program to identify and mitigate potential tree hazards is also critically important and can save not only trees, but a great deal of money spent clearing them out, repairing the damage their failure causes, and then replacing them.

Second, a community should have in place a storm or disaster response plan that includes trees. The more quickly downed trees and branches are cleared after a storm, the faster emergency rescue efforts can take place, with potentially life-saving consequences. Does your community have a disaster response plan? Are trees included? If so, do you know each person's responsibilities, their contact information, the emergency and

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Community Size is No Barrier to Improvement



A day out of school provided a chance for hands-on learning and community service for these youngsters from Notus High School. They helped transform a weedy lot into a useful park.

Notus, Idaho, is a good example of what a small community can do when everyone pitches in to plant trees and improve public land. Despite a population of only 495, Mayor Marjorie Ellmaker made it her goal to transform a weedy, vacant lot by the city water tower and utility shed into a pleasant, useable park. With a little help from her friends and a grant from the Idaho Department of Lands, she did just that.

Mayor Ellmaker received help from people like Tom Krasowski, the public works superintendent, who worked hard to solicit donations, shop bids, and install a sprinkler system. A student from Notus High School designed the park as her senior project, and the FFA Club did the planting. A morning out of school last spring on a beautiful day helped the cause, as did a barbeque lunch provided by one of the teachers.

Hoot Gibson, owner of DB Nursery and Turf in Boise and a resident of Notus, is donating sod left over from landscaping jobs. By the end of autumn the entire park is expected to have sod and by next spring flowers will be blooming and the young trees will be casting their first full season of shade.

Next time you are near Notus, stop in and visit the town's new Tower Park. And if you live in southwestern Idaho, the next time you think there is a tree-related project worth doing in your community, please contact Debbie Cook, the area's community forestry advisor, for assistance. She and the state's other CFAs are listed in the masthead.

Professionals Agree on Planting Depth

By Gerry Bates, Community Forestry Assistant

A group of 'Green Industry' professionals met this year in the City of Eagle to discuss differences in opinion between landscapers, arborists and tree growers regarding the depth a tree should be planted when balled and burlapped (B&B). The results are important to all who plant trees. Keith Atkins, Eagle's city forester, arranged for the meeting, hoping to develop a planting standard that could be adopted statewide. On hand in addition to Keith were local growers, nursery owners, certified arborists, certified nursery profession-

als, a landscape architect, a horticulture professor and myself.

What surprised everyone was the degree of agreement on proper planting methods between the arborists, landscapers, nurseries and growers, as there has been a fair amount of contention between these groups on this topic in the last few years.

Discussion began with how to identify and locate the root collar, a transitional area between trunk and root tissue, as this is critical to determine proper planting depth. Several different methods of locating the collar were demonstrated. Though current National Standards for Nursery Stock (ANSI Z60.1) specify that its location should be within the top two inches of the root ball, the group found that the root collar can be much deeper. For this reason, everyone concurred that before planting, it's important to find the root collar in the ball for each tree.

It was also agreed by all that the top-most root should be at or above grade when planting, and *never* more than one or two inches below the soil surface. This means soil usually needs to be removed from the top of the ball if planted correctly. Most also agreed that the top 1/3 to 1/2 of the wire basket and burlap should be removed per the National Standard for Tree Care Operations—Transplanting (ANSI A300 Part 6).

Phil Hull, a landscape architect with the Land Group, Inc. in Eagle agreed to prepare draft planting details for both coniferous and deciduous trees in addition to written planting specifications for community landscape projects, and then



Gerry Bates

Gary Moen, a horticulture professor at Boise State University, identifies the root collar of a tree before planting.

submit them to the group for comment and discussion. Additional industry experts will also be brought in for review and comment. These draft planting details and specifications will be presented at the Idaho Horticulture Expo in January.

What was very clear from this meeting is the commitment everyone has to grow and plant trees at a reasonable cost in a way that maximizes the long-term health of the plant.

Note: The Idaho Department of Lands Community Forestry Program has an excellent set of research-based planting specifications designed for communities. You can find these at IDL —www.idaho.gov/lands. Click on community forestry, then "CF Grants" at the top of the page, then on "Tree Purchase & Planting Specification" under the Tool-kit section.

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evacuation corridors, where the equipment will come from, where wood debris will go, the location of staging areas, etc.? A good, comprehensive plan that everyone understands can make the difference between chaos and a speedy and orderly restoration of services.

We've recently added information to our website about preparing for disasters, including development of tree risk management programs and emergency response plans, and the problems and solutions for various weather or wildfire related events. I urge you to visit www.idaho.gov/lands — click on Community Forestry, then Technical Tree Information at the top of the page. There you will find a link on preparing for and coping with disasters. You will find many useful tools to help you prepare. For additional assistance, please contact your community forestry assistant or me — our contact information is in the masthead.

One of the many lessons to be learned from Hurricane Katrina is to be prepared for *when*, not if, a disaster strikes. Is your community ready?

— David Stephenson

Community Forestry Coordinator

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Joint Education Program Underway in North Idaho

'Community Canopy' is the name of an innovative, cooperative effort now underway in Coeur d'Alene, Hayden and Post Falls. The three communities were jointly awarded an Urban and Community Forestry Program Development Grant to provide tree education to businesses and residents. The project was made necessary in part to counter the effects of malpractice on the part of some local tree companies, and to promote the proper care and protection of trees in the three cities.

The project began in 2003 with a steering committee that included a local landscape architect, an IDL forester, a University of Idaho extension agent and representatives from each of the three communities. The first messages selected for the campaign were proper planting, watering and protection of trees from pests. A tree care educator position was created to conduct group presentations and workshops, conduct one-on-one contacts with tree workers, meet with homeowners' associations and the mass media, and develop exhibits and educational publications.

Projects completed this year include:

- A campaign logo
- A brochure, *Trees are Great for Business*
- First attempts to schedule 'tailgate' training sessions with the crews of some of the over 100 turf and landscaping companies working in the area.
- Flip chart visual aids to be used with presentations
- A portable, table-top exhibit
- Letters sent to all area churches
- A PowerPoint presentation was developed and information was provided to the mass media.

It's Tree City USA Application Time

The trees are turning color — an indication that its time for Tree City USA applications. For those currently certified, you should have received your recertification and Growth Award applications in the mail. For those wishing to apply for the first time, please contact the community forestry assistant in your area or call/e-mail the IDL Community Forestry Office (See masthead). Applications are also available on-line at www.idaho.gov/lands. Click on the community forestry icon, then on Tree City USA. Note that applications are due to the community forestry assistant in your area by December 1st, 2005.



Garth Davis

David Stephenson, Idaho's Community Forestry Coordinator, is not putting a hex on this tree. To the contrary he is showing landscape contractors and city employees the correct way to plant that will help ensure the tree's health and longevity. The event was part of a Community Canopy Workshop last spring in Coeur d'Alene.

Calendar

October 27, 2005

Proper Pruning of Woody Plants, Spokane County Extension Education Center. (www.pnwisa.org/Fall05Insert.pdf)

November 3, 2005

My Life as a Plant in the Inland Northwest, Spokane County Extension Education Center. (www.pnwisa.org/Fall05Insert.pdf)

November 5- 6, 2005

Rigging Workshop for Arborists, Seattle WA. (www.pnwisa.org/Fall05Insert.pdf)

November 17-18, 2005

National Urban Forest Conference, Westin-Charlotte, Charlotte, NC. (www.americanforests.org/conference)

December 1, 2005

Tree City USA Applications due to the Community Forestry Assistant in your area. (David Stephenson, 800/432-4648 or communitytrees@idl.state.id.us)

December 4-7, 2005

American Society of Consulting Arborists National Conference, Palm Springs, CA. (www.asca-consultants.org/conferences.html)

January 17, 2006

Idaho Community Forestry Advisory Council Meeting, Boise (Contact David Stephenson at above or Gene Grey, chairman, at 208/739-3443)

January 18 – 20, 2006

Idaho Horticulture Expo, Boise Centre on the Grove, Boise. (Ann Bates, 800/INA-GROW or www.inlagrow.org/expo2004.htm)

January 26 – 27, 2006

Inland Northwest Turf, Tree & Landscape Conference, Coeur d'Alene Resort, CDA (WSU Conference Office at 800/942-4978 or <http://capps.wsu.edu/ttlc/>)

Upcoming Arborist Certification Exams

January 21, 2006—Boise, ID – morning exam
June 3, 2006—Twin Falls, ID – morning exam
July 8, 2006—Boise, ID – morning exam

Upcoming Certified Tree Worker Exams

July 8, 2006—Boise, ID

For information or to register, contact: Pacific Northwest Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at 503/874-8263 or 217-355-9411 or email: info@pnwisa.org.



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Tree tip



James R. Fazio

This innovative staking system allows for beneficial sway but will stabilize the young tree in strong wind.

Stake if you Must – But Allow for Sway

Research shows that newly-planted trees grow stronger if they are allowed a little room to sway. In other words, give them a little ‘wiggle room.’

- The tree develops new roots faster or more vigorously, thereby becoming safely established in its new home more quickly.
- The trunk develops taper that helps stabilize the tree as it grows older.
- You prevent disappointment and save replacement money by staking properly, including removal of stakes and binding after one or two growing seasons.
- You save time and money if you eliminate staking entirely.

P.S. Now is a good time to check previously-planted trees and remove stakes and bindings that may be girdling the tree or otherwise damaging it.